

CLAIMS

1. A computer-implemented method comprising steps of:
 - (A) receiving input from a user indicating a modification to a select fixed information unit in at least one document in a document collection generated by a document generator based on at least one document template specifying fixed information in the document collection, document data specifying variable information in the document collection, and an information integration specification specifying a process for integrating the fixed information and the variable information; and
 - (B) providing, within the at least one document template, a modified fixed information unit specifier that specifies a modified fixed information unit reflecting the indicated modification to the select fixed information unit.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of:
 - (C) modifying the select fixed information unit in the at least one document to reflect the modification indicated by the input.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of:
 - (C) replacing the select fixed information unit in the at least one document with the modified fixed information unit.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of:
(B) generating a second document collection including the variable information and the modified fixed information unit.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (B) comprises steps of:

(B)(1) identifying, in the at least one document template, a fixed information unit specifier that specifies the select fixed information unit; and

(B)(2) modifying the identified fixed information unit specifier to specify the modified fixed information unit.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (B) comprises a step of:

(B)(1) adding to the at least one document template a new fixed information unit specifier that specifies the modified fixed information unit.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one document template includes a plurality of fixed information unit specifiers specifying a plurality of fixed information units, wherein the plurality of fixed information unit specifiers have a plurality of information unit priorities, and wherein the step (B)(1) comprises a step of assigning to the new fixed information unit specifier an information unit priority that is higher than the information unit priority of any of the plurality of fixed information unit specifiers that specify the select fixed information unit.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (A) comprises a step of receiving input indicating modification of fixed information within the select fixed information unit.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (A) comprises a step of receiving input indicating addition of fixed information within the select fixed information unit.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (A) comprises a step of receiving input indicating deletion of fixed information within the select fixed information unit.

11. A computer-implemented method comprising steps of:

- (C) receiving input from a user indicating a modification of a select variable information unit in at least one document in a document collection generated by a document generator based on at least one document template specifying fixed information in the document collection, document data specifying variable information in the document collection, and an information integration specification specifying a process for integrating the fixed information and the variable information; and
- (D) providing, within the at least one document template, a fixed information unit specifier that specifies the select variable information unit.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising a step of:

- (C) modifying the select variable information unit in the at least one document to reflect the modification indicated by the input.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising a step of:

- (C) replacing the select variable information unit in the at least one of the documents with a modified variable information unit reflecting the modification indicated by the input.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising a step of:

- (C) generating a second document collection including the fixed information and a modified variable information unit reflecting the modification indicated by the input.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the step (B) comprises a step of:

- (B)(1) adding to the at least one document template a new fixed information unit specifier that specifies a modified variable information unit reflecting the modification indicated by the input.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the at least one document template includes a plurality of fixed information unit specifiers specifying a plurality of fixed information units, wherein the plurality of fixed information unit specifiers have a plurality of information unit priorities, and wherein the step (B)(1) comprises a step of assigning to the new fixed information unit specifier a default information unit priority.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the step (A) comprises a step of receiving input indicating modification of variable information within the select variable information unit.

18. The method of claim 11, wherein the step (A) comprises a step of receiving input indicating addition of variable information within the select variable information unit.

19. The method of claim 11, wherein the step (A) comprises a step of receiving input indicating deletion of variable information within the select variable information unit.

20. A system comprising:

at least one document template including a plurality of fixed information specifiers, the plurality of fixed information specifiers specifying a plurality of versions of a fixed information unit, each of the plurality of versions of the fixed information unit having a priority;

document data specifying variable information;

an information integration specification specifying a process for integrating the fixed information unit and the variable information; and

document generation means for generating the fixed information unit by performing steps of:

- (A) initializing the fixed information unit to an initial value; and
- (B) for each of the plurality of fixed information specifiers *u*, in ascending order of priority, performing steps of:
 - (1) generating an interim fixed information unit specified by the fixed information specifier *u*; and
 - (2) applying the interim fixed information unit to the fixed information unit.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the document generation means further comprises means for performing a step of:

- (C) integrating the fixed information unit with the variable information using the process specified by the information integration specification.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein the step (B)(2) comprises a step of replacing the fixed information unit with the interim fixed information unit.

23. The system of claim 20, wherein the step (B)(2) comprises a step of adding the interim fixed information unit to the fixed information unit.

24. The system of claim 20, wherein the step (B)(2) comprises a step of applying properties specified by the interim fixed information unit to the fixed information unit.

25. A system comprising:

means for receiving input from a user indicating a modification to a select fixed information unit in at least one document in a document collection generated by a document generator based on at least one document template specifying fixed information in the document collection, document data specifying variable information in the document collection, and an information integration specification specifying a process for integrating the fixed information and the variable information; and

means for providing, within the at least one document template, a modified fixed information unit specifier that specifies a modified fixed information unit reflecting the indicated modification to the select fixed information unit.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for generating a second document collection including the variable information and the modified fixed information unit.

27. The system of claim 25, wherein the means for providing comprises:

means for identifying, in the at least one document template, a fixed information unit specifier that specifies the select fixed information unit; and

means for modifying the identified fixed information unit specifier to specify the modified fixed information unit.

28. A system comprising:

means receiving input from a user indicating a modification of a select variable information unit in at least one document in a document collection generated by a document generator based on at least one document template specifying fixed information in the document collection, document data specifying variable information in the document collection, and an information integration specification specifying a process for integrating the fixed information and the variable information; and

means for providing, within the at least one document template, a fixed information unit specifier that specifies the select variable information unit.

29. The system of claim 28, further comprising:

means for generating a second document collection including the fixed information and a modified variable information unit reflecting the modification indicated by the input.

30. In a system including:

at least one document template including a plurality of fixed information specifiers, the plurality of fixed information specifiers specifying a plurality of versions of a fixed information unit, each of the plurality of versions of the fixed information unit having a priority;

document data specifying variable information; and

an information integration specification specifying a process for integrating the fixed information unit and the variable information;

a method for generating the fixed information unit, the method comprising steps of:

- (A) initializing the fixed information unit to an initial value; and
- (B) for each of the plurality of fixed information specifiers *u*, in ascending order of priority, performing steps of:
 - (1) generating an interim fixed information unit specified by the fixed information specifier *u*; and
 - (2) applying the interim fixed information unit to the fixed information unit.